Direct Care Worker Job Quality Grant Q&A's
2.21.24

This list represents all questions asked by the February 8, 2024 at 4:00 PM ET due date for questions. Questions from 27 to 68 have been added to the original list of questions asked through January 12, 2024. Please note: questions and answers may be paraphrased. If you do not see your word-for-word question, please review similar questions. If you feel your question was not addressed, please resend your original email that shows it was sent before the deadline to: RA-LI-BWDA-GS@pa.gov, using NGA Application Direct Care Worker Job Quality Questions in the subject line.

1. Q: The grant notice specifies the following are considered related roles: personal care assistant, home health aide, certified nursing assistant. Can you please confirm if this is inclusive of a direct support professional?

> A: Direct support professional can only be included if the job duties are the same. Job titles don't necessarily matter, job duties do.

2. Q: Can the $2.8M award be spread over more than five providers? Can a portion of the amount requested be funded to allow for more providers?

> A: Funding distribution depends on many factors, dollar amount requested, applicant pool size, etc. There are occasions where awardees do not receive 100% of their requested award for a number of reasons.

3. Q: From page 7 of the Notice of Grant Availability what are considered similar positions to personal care assistant, home health aide, and certified nursing assistant? Would this include mental health case managers, therapists, early childhood home visiting staff, and peer support staff for mental health?

> A: This grant was designed with the traditional direct care worker in mind. BWDA worked from the information in the Blueprint for Strengthening Pennsylvania's Direct Care Workforce developed by Pennsylvania's Long-Term Care Council. (Please see the attached Direct Care Job Titles Q&As for the complete summary). To access the Blueprint in its entirety, please click here: LTCC Blueprint for Strengthening Pennsylvania's Direct Care Workforce_APR19 (pa.gov). Again, we are looking for the traditional direct care worker job duties (as described in the attached), not job titles.
>
>> "JOB TITLES
>>
>> While the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics defines three standard occupational classifications (SOC) of direct care workers – personal care aides, home health aides, and nursing assistants – a variety of names and titles are used to refer to these workers, including, but not limited to, attendants, assisted living aides, home health and home care aides (workers), nurse aides, certified nurse aides, nursing assistants, personal care aides, and program assistants. These workers are often collectively referred to as direct care workers and will be throughout this blueprint. Direct care workers also include those employed under the participant-directed model. Home health aides provide in-home services and supports, while personal care aides work in the consumer's home as well as other community-based settings/living

arrangements such as adult daily living centers, personal care homes, assisted living residences, etc. Nursing assistants are typically employed in nursing homes in the LTSS system.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Direct care workers provide the vast majority of paid hands-on care, services, and supports to consumers across the LTSS continuum. They assist consumers with a variety of activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, toileting, eating, and other daily living supports, as well as other tasks (e.g., medication administration, blood pressure readings, etc.) depending on the setting."

Please note: There were several versions of this question posed with variations to job titles, such as Direct Support Professionals, Childcare Workers, etc., variations, omissions and/or additions to job duties, serving different populations, in different environments including those serving individuals with intellectual disabilities, serving individuals in psychiatric hospitals, serving in the behavioral health system, individuals who work in programs funded by the Office of Developmental Programs or other programs. <u>This answer applies to all of those and similar types of questions.</u> **This grant is to serve employees providing direct care services as defined above.**

If you apply, there will need to be a clear connection between the employee group you are serving and the NGA's intent. We recommend in your narrative you refer back to the NGA often, so it is clear you understand the intent and are making a case that your population should be served under the grant.

4. Q: Does the applicant need to be a 501(c)3 or can an LLC apply?

A: Applicants do not need to be a 501(c)3. LLCs may apply.

5. Q: Can one entity submit multiple applications?

A: Yes.

6. Q: Does our project have to run through the whole period of performance?

A: Grantees who complete their projects, meet all of their benchmarks, and utilize their full award may close-out upon project completion.

7. Q: We are only covering a single county, can we apply?

A: Yes.

8. Q: Is service in one county considered enough of a footprint or are you really looking for bigger providers that serve across the whole state?

A: Geographic reach is one of many factors. Applicants serving a smaller area may be proposing to serve more direct care workers, and/or engage more employers, and/or have other components of their project that make them suitable for this grant.

9. Q: You emphasize rural areas; can we apply if we are not serving rural areas?

A: Yes

10. Q: Can the grant be used for salary increases?

A: Possibly, we would want to see in your sustainability plan how you will maintain this after the grant ends.

11. Q: The acronym CDWE is on pages 5 and 9 of the NGA, but its not written out anywhere.

A: This is a typo, both of those should read DCWJQ. This will be updated in the posted NGA.

12. Q: Are Administration and Indirect Cost Rate two different things?

A: That depends on what your indirect costs are. Any administrative indirect costs are subject to the 10% rule. Total administrative costs cannot exceed 10% of your total award. Your indirect costs need to follow WIOA guidelines.

Administrative (admin) activities include activities related to accounting, budgeting, financial management, payroll, auditing, oversight of administrative duties, developing systems related to administrative duties, human resources, and legal functions. All other activities are program.

Administrative functions:

1. Performing the following overall general administrative functions and coordination of these functions:
    a. Accounting, budgeting, financial and cash management functions
    b. Procurement and purchasing functions
    c. Property management functions
    d. Personnel management functions
    e. Payroll functions
    f. Coordinating the resolution of findings arising from audits, reviews, investigations, and incident reports
    g. Audit functions
    h. General legal services functions
    i. Developing systems and procedures, including information systems, required for these administrative functions
    j. Fiscal agent responsibilities
2. Performing oversight and monitoring responsibilities related to administrative functions
3. Travel costs incurred for official business in carrying out administrative activities

13. Q: Can the applicant be an employer, provided it meets the other eligibility criteria?
    A: Yes.

14. Q: Is there a preference for funding intermediary organizations that work with more than one employer?

A: No

15. Q: Can we apply with only one employer?

A: Yes.

16. Q: We are a multi-agency entity. Can/should multiple applications be submitted?

A: You may do either. The decision would be based on your project plan(s).

17. Q: Lobbying is listed as an unallowable cost. Is advocacy allowed? Could you give an example that could be included under required activities, including functioning as direct care advocates, long-term industry changes, that could potentially be advocacy work?

A: It depends. Any activities that seek to influence a politician or public office on an issue is not allowable. Your grant application will need to define your advocacy activities and plans.

18. Q: Regarding advocacy, can we do things like utilizing memberships to trade organizations?

A: Yes. Please explain why and how that would be a required activity to help you meet your grant goals.

19. Q: Are homecare registries eligible to apply?

A: It is not likely that a registry would be eligible to apply. Due to the job quality emphasis and focus of the grant, we are looking for agencies and employers who are working directly with direct care workers, where a registry is serving as a referral source. If you are a registry who is ensuring your employer network meets the criteria as described in the NGA, you may potentially qualify. You would need to demonstrate what you are doing and how you will meet the goals.

20. Q: Where is the Good Job Principles Slide?

A: The Factsheet is listed among the NGA Appendices. This link can be found on page 3 of the NGA: Good Jobs Principles (dol.gov).

21. Q: Can you share the link to the PA SAP Vendor ID info?

A: Vendor Registration (pa.gov)

22. Q: Can you explain what a viable project looks like to you?

A: A viable project will have the ability to successfully meet the goals of the grant. We encourage you to read the NGA in its entirety for a complete understanding of what would encompass a viable project.

23. Q: Regarding the "Other Evaluation Criteria," do applicants need to meet all criteria to receive the points or can we receive the points by meeting only one?

A: You do not need to include each of the five initiatives or limit yourself to those five. If you have other new solution-based initiatives you believe are suitable, we encourage you to include those as well. A compelling response to this section has the potential to earn the full 10 points, regardless of how many initiatives you propose.

24. Q: Where is the information about job duties found?

A: In the attached Direct Care Job Titles Q&A document.

25. Q: Can we get the slides emailed?

A: The slides will be posted for viewing on the L&I website alongside this NGA.

26. Q: Could you give some examples of stakeholders and collaborations?

A: Stakeholders would be anyone with a vested interest in your project, and collaborations would be any partnerships that help you reach the goals of your project.

27. Q: We are asked to choose *training or services* on Application. Is this defined by providers or by L&I?

A: The providers.

28. Q: How is a targeted industry cluster defined?

A: Industry Clusters can be found at Industry Clusters (pa.gov).

29. Q: What's a sub cluster ?

A: Sub clusters can be found at IPA Industry Cluster Publication.

30. Q: Do we need matching funds? If so, how much ?

A: No.

31. Q: What is considered "large portions"? {of the state}

A: The larger the geographic coverage area in comparison to other applicants that higher the score.

32. Q: Can we apply this funding to current workers or are we required to hire new workers?

A: You may do either or both.

33. Q: Can the grant be used for sign-on bonuses for new hires?

A: The grant may be used for sign-on bonuses, however, you must demonstrate in your Sustainability Plan how you will maintain this after the grant ends.

34. Q: I am writing to clarify if for-profit healthcare organizations are eligible to apply for funding in this grant opportunity?

A: Yes.

35. Q: Are there parameters/recommendations concerning the size or scope of agencies when requesting a specific funding amount?

A. There are not parameters for size or scope of agencies, however we recommend you demonstrate your capacity related to your proposed project.

36. Q: It seems that one major component of measuring improvement over the period of performance will be a pre- and post-employee satisfaction survey which will be provided at the time of the award. A few questions on this: Since the period of performance is well over 1 year, will the results be adjusted in any way considering the workforce being surveyed initially could possibly be quite different compared to the final workforce being surveyed (even with substantial improvements in employee satisfaction, it is still anticipated we would see turnover)?

A: We do not anticipate making adjustments.

37. Q: If the final score from the satisfaction survey happens to show a decrease in employee satisfaction, what would that mean - would we be responsible for returning the grant money?

A: No, this is a cost reimbursement grant that is not currently linked to employee satisfaction. The Commonwealth may use this information to assess future grant applications.

38. Q: What other measurement tools would be required?

A: Applicants are encouraged to propose measurement tools. From page 5 of the NGA: *This competitive grant opportunity will be focused on working with agencies and employers to create better places to work and to **identify the job quality metrics needed to affirm these goals are being achieved.***

39. Q: Would any or all of the following be permissible to fund under the grant: tuition reimbursement, bonuses, shift differential increases, or other one-time/time-sensitive incentives (eg. increasing a DSP's hourly rate if they cover a call-off)

A: Yes, these are permissible expenditures, however, applicants must demonstrate in their Sustainability Plan how these strategies will be maintained after the grant ends.

40. Q: As instructed in the NGA, applicants are to reach out to their local Workforce Development Board to inform them of their intent to applying for the DCWJQ Grant. As an agency that hires Direct Care Workers who serve in multiple counties, should we reach out to all of the county boards where our DCWs work or are we only required to reach out to the one where our corporate offices are located?

A: You may do either. You may choose how to best address this. You may contact the LWDB for your corporate office, or you may contact the LWDBs for each of your offices. A list of the LWDBS can be found here: Local Workforce Development Boards (pa.gov)

41. Q: Is creating a new position to support the action item proposed considered as part 10% of the allowable "administrative" budget cost?

A: Depending on how you define the role, something like ***support the action item proposed*** may be Program Staff as opposed to Administrative Staff. Only the items specified in the answer to Question 12 are considered administrative costs. If it is an administrative position, then yes, it would be part of your 10% Administrative budget. Please refer to the Budget Prep Manual located in the Budget Preparation Instructions of the Budget Form.

42. Q: In Appendix F, is it correct that we can adapt the form to add as many action items as needed?

A: Yes.

43. Q: In which Appendix/Section do we give a narrative of our company's background and outlining what the problem is and how we intend to fix it?

A: There is not an Appendix for your Narrative. Pages 14 to 16 of the NGA explain how to order and name each of your documents. In this case, the Narrative would be the third attachment in your email, behind the Application Form attachment and Project Summary attachment.

44. Q: Our submission will address our plan to increase recruitment (for providing services to clients) and enhanced training for caregivers. Do we use "Service" or "Training" as the drop-down response under "project type" in Appendix A?

> A: You may choose either. The applicant will define those terms and then may choose whichever of the two is the best fit for their project.

45. Q: Who specifically should the authorized representative be?

> A: This is anyone authorized to sign for the entity, generally your President, CEO, CFO, etc., and/or a key member of your Executive Team or Senior Leadership Team. This representative will also be the signatory on the grant agreement.

46: Q: Is the authorized representative and the fiscal agent the same?

> A: The authorized representative is the person that signs on behalf of the applicant company while the fiscal agent is the entity that will receive, manage, and disburse grant funds for the applicant.

47. Q: Please clarify the term fiscal agent in Appendix B as it pertains to this document.

> A: From page 5 of the NGA: *Fiscal agents will receive, manage, and disburse grant funds. Fiscal agents include eligible applicants, as detailed above (pages 3-4). If organizations apply as a partnership, the application must indicate a single entity as the lead applicant who must also act as fiscal agent. If Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) apply as a region, the region must appoint a single LWDB as the lead applicant who must also act as fiscal agent.*

48. Q: Regarding invoicing for the action items that will be included in our grant submission, if awarded grant monies, do we *forward* invoices received from our partners to L&I, or, do we *create and submit* invoices to L&I?

> A: There will be a detailed Fiscal training at the time of your award. No, you will not forward your partners' invoices to L&I. L&I will only receive invoices from you as the lead grantee. You will be trained on how to submit supporting documentation your partners have sent to you and how to create and submit your invoices, etc.

49. Q: Does the application form and project summary count towards the 10-page limit of the grant application, or is the 10-page limit solely for the project narrative? Is it only the project narrative that needs to include page numbers?

> A: The Application Form and Project Summary do not count towards the 10-page limit of the Project Narrative. Yes, only the Project Narrative needs to include page numbers.

50. Q: Can this grant be used towards costs related to a program that an agency already has established for Direct Care Worker retention?

> A: The Notice of Grant Availability does not stipulate only new initiatives will be considered for funding. You may potentially be able to use the grant for costs related to an established project, however, you would need to explain why you are seeking funding for something you are currently doing without this funding, and you would also need to explain in your Impact and

Sustainability response how you will maintain your work after the grant ends. The purpose of this grant is to support new initiatives or to supplement, but not supplant, existing initiatives.

51. Q: According to the grant's RFP, it read that up to 10% of funding can used for administrative costs. Please clarify what administrative costs include. Would it include personnel as well? And: Administrative costs vs personnel costs- can we charge staff time to this grant, meaning project director, coordinator, outreach, presenters etc.?

> A: Please refer to the Budget Preparation Instructions Tab in Appendix C_DCW Job Quality_Budget Form, where you will find the Budget Preparation Manual found here: DLI Grants (pa.gov) (screen shot below) for full details.

Budget Prep Manual
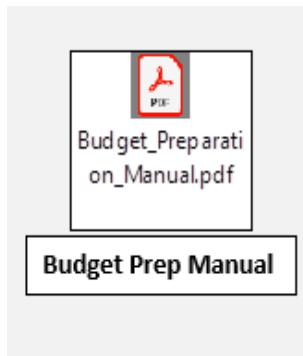
Refer to the answer to Question 12 for a detailed description of Administrative costs.

52. Q: The organization currently operates in approximately five counties but intends to branch out. Should we only be including the counties we currently operate in on the application form?

> A: Only include counties where you are currently operational. You may include your concrete expansion plans including start dates and other details in your project narrative, if these plans are near completion, and will be in place before July 1, 2024.

53. Q: In Appendix B should that information be consistent with what is included in the application?

> A: Generally, yes, we need to see consistency throughout, however, if this question is related to Question 52, after you list your counties as they appear on your Application Form, then you may include something like 'e.g., '*We are expanding to include Lackawanna and Butler counties which will be fully operational beginning April 1, 2024', etc. **As with both questions, these must be concrete plans, near completion, with clear completion and start dates.** Also please remember there is a two-page limit for the Project Summary (Appendix B), and it may not include information that is not captured in your Narrative or other documents.

54. Q: As an employer, how would I submit more than one application? Would I submit for one each initiative separately? I see that some people have inquired if a single employer can submit more than one application.

> A: You may submit as many applications for as many initiatives as you wish. Each application must be completed and submitted separately, including separate email submissions for each. Each must be a complete application package, including all required documents and attachments. In general, separate applications should be submitted only if dealing with different

populations. If you are offering multiple job quality initiatives to the same population this should be a single application.

55. Q: Are applicants required to describe how they will identify and drive all eight Good Job Principles and steps to address them or only some?

> A: No, it is not required, but you may include that in your response if it makes sense for your project. From page 5 of the Notice of Grant Availability: …*L&I seeks to advance direct care workers' job quality through eight drivers of job quality: Recruitment and Hiring, Benefits, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA), Empowerment and Representation, Job Security and Working Conditions, Organizational Culture, Pay, and Skills and Advancement as described in the Good Job Principles (which will be referred to as Principles through the remainder of this document) referenced above.* **Applicants will pick two areas of focus from these Principles, and may incorporate additional principles if desired.**

56. Q: The DCWJQ NGA specifies that "Priority consideration will be given to applicants who have the capacity to support large portions of the state of Pennsylvania, in particular rural areas, intend to target unserved or underserved populations, and/or have or propose initiatives to move the direct care industry forward." Can you rank the following in order of importance, i.e. given more priority consideration?

> i. *"support large portions of the state of Pennsylvania"*
> ii. *"[support] in particular rural areas [within the state of Pennsylvania]"*
> iii. *"[intent] to target unserved or underserved populations"*
> iv. *"propose initiatives to move the direct care industry forward"*

> A: These are not prioritized in a particular order.

57. Q: In a scenario where both the primary organization and the partner organization are applying for DCWJQ grant funding: Does the primary organization need to indicate the partner organization's intent to apply for grant funding?

> A: You may if you wish. Each application is evaluated and scored on its own merit. However, it is important to identify any overlap between the two proposals as we will not reimburse the same expenses twice.

58. Q: In a scenario where both the primary organization and the partner organization are applying for DCWJQ grant funding: When both organizations are applying for grant funding, how will this partnership affect award amount percentages/allocation?

> A: Each application is evaluated and scored on its own merit. However, it is important to identify any overlap between the two proposals as we will not reimburse the same expenses twice. If two organizations with overlapping activities/expenditures are awarded grants, the Commonwealth will require adjustments to budgets and action plans prior to finalizing the awards.

59. Q: In the 'Allowable Costs' section, the DCWJQ NGA specifies that "Administrative costs must not exceed 10% of the total amount requested". Are there any other categories of expenses with percentage maximums that we need to adhere to?

A: No, however, we expect all allowable costs will adhere to the general rules, i.e., what a prudent person would consider justifiable/allowable for the direct purpose of meeting the objectives and goals of the grant.

60. Q: We have a few questions related to budget forms. We did read the Budget Preparation Operational Manual, but some of the terms/requirements are still unclear.

A: Regarding the budget, please be advised we are more concerned with how and on what you are proposing to utilize your requested funding, not whether or not everything is on the correct line. If your proposed budget has these kinds of errors, we will work with you to address them should you receive an award.

61. Q: In Program Operational Cost (B2 Cost Category), what is the definition of "reasonable and allowable"?

A: Generally, what a prudent person would consider justifiable/allowable for the direct purpose of meeting the objectives and goals of the grant. Should you receive an award, please be advised grantees are instructed to please contact BWDA **prior** to making any purchase for goods or services when there are any questions or concerns about whether or not they are allowable.

62. Q: In Administrative Operational Costs (A2 Cost Category)- Is this were we would put the services that we are purchasing from our partners?

A: Generally not, however it would depend what those services are. If it is a programmatic partner, then it would be program.

63. Q: In Administrative Indirect Costs (A3 Cost Category)- what is an example or two if an Indirect Administrative Cost?

- A: According to the Budget Preparation Operational Manual, indirect costs are defined in the cost principles as those costs uncured for a common or joint purpose, benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable without a disproportionate effort. Indirect costs are usually recaptured through the application of an indirect cost rate, and the costs are usually accumulated within the organization in an indirect cost pool. Assuming you have an Indirect Cost Rate, this could include items such as administrative support for the entity as a whole.

64. Q: In Program Indirect Costs (B6)- what is an example or two of a Program Indirect Cost?

- A: According to the Budget Preparation Operational Manual, indirect costs are defined in the cost principles as those costs uncured for a common or joint purpose, benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable without a disproportionate effort. Indirect costs are usually recaptured through the application of an indirect cost rate, and the costs are usually accumulated within the organization in an indirect cost pool. Assuming you have an Indirect Cost Rate, this could include items such as administrative support for the entity as a whole.

65. Q: In Supportive Services (B5 Cost Category)- Is a sign-on bonus offered as incentive for recruitment considered a Supportive Service?

> A: Sign-on bonuses should be included as Fringe Benefits, not supportive services. Any additional or enhanced employment wages may potentially be allowed under the grant, however, if you are proposing to do this, you must explain in detail in your Sustainability Plan how you will continue this strategy after the grant ends.

66. Q: In Training Cost Category (c)- Is there a standard rate at what OTJ must be paid per state requirement?

> A. No, there is not a standard rate. Under OJT guidelines employees will be paid the standard rate, the same rate as any other employee in that position.

67. Q: If a page of the budget is not applicable to our submission, do we notate the page with "N/A" or leave it blank?

> A: Please respond with N/A.

68. Q: Can you please provide a specific link or page where we can find those?

> A. Sure, those Q&As are in a document called DCWJQ Q&A and are listed among all of the Notice of Grant Availability documents which are found here: DLI Grants (pa.gov).